

The Second Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians

CHAPTER 1

1 Brethren, we ought so to think of Jesus Christ as of God: as of the judge of the living, and the dead; nor should we think any less of our salvation.

2 For if we think meanly of him, we shall hope only to receive some small things from him.

3 And if we do so; we shall sin; not considering from whence we have been called, and by whom, and to what place; and how much Jesus Christ vouchsafed to suffer for our sakes.

4 What recompense then shall we render unto him? Or what fruit that may be worthy of what he has given to us?

5 For indeed how great are those advantages which we owe to him in relation to our holiness? He has illuminated us: as a father, he has called us his children; he has saved us who were lost and undone.

6 What praise shall we give to him? Or what reward that may be answerable to those things which we have received?

7 We were defective in our understandings; worshipping stones and wood; gold, and silver, and brass, the works of men's hands; and our whole life was nothing else but death.

8 Wherefore being encompassed with darkness, and having such a mist before our eyes, we have looked up, and through his will have laid aside the cloud wherewith we were surrounded.

9 For he had compassion upon us, and being moved in his bowels towards us, he saved us; having beheld in us much error, and destruction; and seen that we had no hope of salvation, but only through him.

10 For he called us who were not; and was pleased from nothing to give us being.

CHAPTER 2

1 Rejoice, thou barren, that bearest not, break forth and cry thou that travailest not; for she that is desolate hath many more children than she that hath an husband.

2 In that he said, Rejoice thou barren that bearest not, he spake of us: for our church was barren before that children were given unto it.

3 And again; when he said, Cry thou that travailest not; he implied thus much: That after the manner of women in travail, we should not cease to put up our prayers unto God abundantly.

4 And for what follows, because she that is desolate hath more children than she that hath an husband: it was therefore added, because our people which seem to have been forsaken by God, now believing in him, are become more than they who seemed to have God.

5 And another Scripture saith, I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. The meaning of which is this: that those who were lost must be saved.

6 For that is, indeed, truly great and wonderful, not to confirm those things that are yet standing, but those which are falling.

7 Even so did it seem good to Christ to save what was lost; and when he came into the world, he saved many, and called us who were already lost.

8 Seeing then he has shewed so great mercy towards us; and chiefly for that, we who are alive, do now no longer sacrifice to dead Gods, nor pay any worship to them, but have by him been brought to the knowledge of the Father of truth.

9 Whereby shall we shew that we do indeed know him, but by not denying him by whom we have come to the knowledge of him?

10 For even he himself saith, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father. This therefore is our reward if we shall confess him by whom we have been saved.

11 But, wherein must we confess him?—Namely, in doing those things which he saith, and not disobeying his commandments: by worshipping him not with our lips only, but with all our heart, and with all our mind. For he saith in Isaiah: This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

12 Let us then not only call him Lord; for that will not save us. For he saith: Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall be saved, but he that doeth righteousness.

13 Wherefore, brethren, let us confess him by our works; by loving one another; in not committing adultery, not speaking evil against each other, not envying one another; but by being temperate, merciful, good.

14 Let us also have a mutual sense of one another's sufferings; and not be covetous of money: but let us, by our good works, confess God, and not by those that are otherwise.

15 Also let us not fear men: but rather God. Wherefore, if we should do such wicked things, the Lord hath said: Though ye should be joined unto me, even in my very bosom, and not keep my commandments, I would cast you off, and say unto you: Depart from me; I know not whence you are, ye workers of iniquity.

CHAPTER 3

1 Wherefore, brethren, leaving willingly for conscience sake our sojourning in this world, let us do the will of him who has called us, and not fear to depart out of this world.

2 For the Lord saith, Ye shall be as sheep in the midst of wolves. Peter answered and said, What if the wolves shall tear in pieces the sheep? Jesus said unto Peter, Let not the sheep fear the wolves after death: And ye also fear not those that kill you, and after that have no more that they can do unto you; but fear him who after you are dead, has power to cast both soul and body into hell-fire.

3 For consider, brethren, that the sojourning of this flesh in the present world, is but little, and of a short continuance, but the promise of Christ is great and wonderful, even the rest of the kingdom that is to come, and of eternal life.

4 What then must we do that we may attain unto it?—We must order our conversation holily and righteously, and look upon all the things of this world as none of ours, and not desire them. For, if we desire to possess them we fall from the way of righteousness.

5 For thus saith the Lord, No servant can serve two masters. If therefore we shall desire to serve God and Mammon it will be without profit to us. For what will it profit, if one gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

6 Now this world and that to come are two enemies. This speaketh of adultery and corruption, of covetousness and deceit; but renounces these things.

7 We cannot, therefore, be the friends of both; but we must resolve by forsaking the one, to enjoy the other. And we think it is better to hate the present things, as little, short-lived, and corruptible, and to love those which are to come, which are truly good and incorruptible.

8 For, if we do the will of Christ, we shall find rest: but if not, nothing shall deliver us from eternal punishment if we shall disobey his commands. For even thus saith the Scripture in the prophet Ezekiel, If Noah, Job, and Daniel should rise up, they shall not deliver their children in captivity.

9 Wherefore, if such righteous men are not able by their righteousness to deliver their children; how can we hope to enter into the kingdom of God, except we keep our baptism holy and

undefiled? Or who shall be our advocate, unless we shall be found to have done what is holy and just?

10 Let us, therefore, my brethren, contend with all earnestness, knowing that our combat is at hand; and that many go long voyages to encounter for a corruptible reward.

11 And yet all are not crowned, but they only that labour much, and strive gloriously. Let us, therefore, so contend, that we may all be crowned. Let us run in the straight road, the race that is incorruptible: and let us in great numbers pass unto it, and strive that we may receive the crown. But and if we cannot all be crowned, let us come as near to it as we are able.

12 Moreover, we must consider, that he who contends in a corruptible combat, if he be found doing anything that is not fair, is taken away and scourged, and cast out of the lists. What think ye then that he shall suffer, who does anything that is not fitting in the combat of immortality?

13 Thus speaks the prophet concerning those who keep not their seal; Their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched; and they shall be for a spectacle unto all flesh.

14 Let us therefore repent, whilst we are yet upon the earth: for we are as clay in the hand of the artificer. For as the potter if he make a vessel, and it be turned amiss in his hands, or broken, again forms it anew; but if he have gone so far as to throw it into the furnace of fire, he can no more bring any remedy to it.

15 So we, whilst we are in this world, should repent with our whole heart for whatsoever evil we have done in the flesh; while we have yet the time of repentance, that we may be saved by the Lord.

16 For after we shall have departed out of this world, we shall no longer be able to confess our sins or repent in the other.

17 Wherefore, brethren, let us do the will of the Father, and keeping our flesh pure, and observing the commandments of the Lord, lay hold on eternal life: for the Lord saith in the gospel, If ye have not kept that which was little, who will give you that which is great?—For I say unto you, he that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much.

18 This, therefore, is what he saith; keep your bodies pure, and your seal without spot, that ye may receive eternal life.

CHAPTER 4

1 And let not any one among you say, that this very flesh is not judged, neither raised up. Consider, in what were you saved; in what did you look up, if not whilst you were in this flesh.

2 We must, therefore, keep our flesh as the temple of God. For in like manner as ye were called in the flesh ye shall also come to judgment in the flesh. Our one Lord Jesus Christ, who has saved us, being first a spirit, was made flesh, and so called us; even so we also shall in this flesh receive the reward.

3 Let us, therefore, love one another, that we may attain unto the kingdom of God. Whilst we have time to be healed, let us deliver up ourselves to God our physician, giving our reward unto him.

4 And what reward shall we give?—Repentance out of a pure heart. For he knows all things before hand, and searches out our very hearts.

5 Let us, therefore, give praise unto him: not only with our mouths, but with all our souls; that he may receive us as children. For so the Lord hath said; They are my brethren, who do the will of my father.

6 Wherefore, my brethren, let us do the will of the Father, who hath called us, that we may live. Let us pursue virtue, and forsake wickedness, which leadeth us into sins; and let us flee all ungodliness, that evils overtake us not.

7 For, if we shall do our diligence to live well, peace shall follow us. And yet how hard is it to find a man that does this? For almost all are led by human fears, choosing rather the present enjoyments, than the future promise.

8 For they know not how great a torment the present enjoyments bring with them; nor what delights the future promise

9 And if they themselves only did this, it might the more easily be endured; but now they go on to infect innocent souls with their evil doctrines; not knowing that both themselves, and those that hear them, shall receive a double condemnation.

10 Let us, therefore, serve God with a pure heart, and we shall be righteous: but if we shall not serve him because we do not believe the promise of God, we shall be miserable.

11 For thus saith the prophet; Miserable are the double minded who doubt in their heart, and say, these things we have heard, even in the time of our fathers, but we have seen none of them, though we have expected them from day to day.

12 O ye fools! compare yourselves to a tree; take the vine for an example. First it sheds its leaves, then it buds, then come the sour grapes, then the ripe fruit; even so my people have borne its disorders and afflictions, but shall hereafter receive good things.

13 Wherefore my brethren, let us not doubt in our minds, but let us expect with hope, that we may receive our reward; for he is faithful, who has promised he will render to every one a reward according to his works.

14 If, therefore, we shall do what is just in the sight of God we shall enter into his kingdom, I and shall receive the promises; Which neither eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man.

15 Wherefore let us every hour expect the kingdom of God in love and righteousness; because we know not the day of God's appearing.

CHAPTER 5

1 For the Lord himself, being asked by a certain person, When his kingdom should come? answered, When two shall be one, and that which is without as that which is within; and the male with the female, neither male nor female.

2 Now two are one, when we speak the truth to each other, and there is (without hypocrisy) one soul in two bodies:

3 And that which is without as that which is within;—He means this: he calls the soul that which is within, and the body that which is without. As therefore thy body appears, so let thy soul be seen by its good works.

4 And the male with the female neither male nor female;—He means this; he calls our anger the male, our concupiscence the female.

5 When therefore a man is come to such a pass that he is subject neither to the one nor the other of these (both of which, through the prevalence of custom, and an evil education, cloud and darken the reason,)

6 But rather, having dispelled the mist arising from them, and being full of shame, shall by repentance have united both his soul and spirit in the obedience of reason; then, as Paul says, there is in us neither male nor female.